

Submitter: Laura Vanderwerf

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB3223

I am a dental professional in Oregon, and I urge you to vote no on House Bill 3223. This bill, if passed, would forbid the Oregon Board of Dentistry from requiring dental assistants to pass any type of exam before becoming certified, including any level of expanded functions dental assistant. The vagueness of this bill could also mean that even exams given at the end of a course or program would be prohibited.

Furthermore, the pathway proposed in the bill appears to require that dental assistants perform certain expanded functions prior to earning certification — meaning that uncertified, unlicensed dental assistants who have never passed any type of exam establishing competency would be performing restorative and orthodontic functions.

Please vote no on HB 3223 because it:

Puts patient health and safety at risk

Lowers the quality of patient care

Undermines and devalues the dental assisting profession

Will worsen the shortage of qualified providers

This bill is damaging to the entire dental community and the patients they serve. It unilaterally forbids a professional requirement about a critical dental team member without input from the dental community. It hinders the dental profession from making decisions about dental assistant qualifications that are in the best interest of public health and safety. And it subverts the expertise and the decision-making authority of the Oregon Board of Dentistry.

I strongly urge you to vote no on HB 3223.

Thank you for your careful consideration of what is best for the health of Oregonians.

Certifications and licensing change a job into a career...and something one can be proud of.

Laura Vanderwerf, RDH, CDA

Past President, Oregon Dental Hygienists' Association